



ANDREW JACKSON

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L I F E
AND
P U B L I C S E R V I C E S
OF
G E N . A N D R E W J A C K S O N

SEVENTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES;

INCLUDING

THE MOST IMPORTANT OF HIS STATE PAPERS.

EDITED BY JOHN S. JENKINS, A. M.

WITH

T H E E U L O G Y ,

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Memoirs hardly require an introduction to the American reader. The life of ANDREW JACKSON is so intimately connected with the history of the country, that the careful student of the one, will not rest satisfied, until he is able fully to understand and appreciate the other. Whatever may be the views entertained in regard to his merits as a warrior, or his abilities as a statesman, his conduct in both capacities was such as must necessarily command attention. His admirers will always be eager to discover some new object for their remembrance and regard; while those who are unwilling to approve his course, either in the camp or the cabinet, will feel impelled, from curiosity, if from no other motive, to examine the incidents of his memorable life. There are many features in his character, and those by no means of the least im-

portance, which all will deem worthy of commendation ; and none can be so much influenced by the prejudices which have survived the termination of his earthly career, as to withhold the appropriate tribute of their respect.

A large portion of the matter to be found in these pages has been heretofore published, in different shapes. While the writer has not hesitated to make free and liberal use of such materials as were within his reach, both the language and the arrangement have, in all cases, been so modified and changed, as to harmonize with his desire of giving to the public, a fair, candid, and impartial life, of the distinguished citizen and soldier whose name appears on the title-page of the volume. But little merit, therefore, is claimed on the score of originality ; and if those for whom it has been prepared, are in any degree gratified by its appearance, the labor bestowed upon it will be amply rewarded.

An attempt has been made, which it is hoped may not be regarded as altogether unsuccessful, to present a full and complete account of the early history of General Jackson, his campaigns against the

Indians, his brilliant achievements during the war of 1812, and his official acts as governor of Florida. A general outline of his administration of the national government is also given; but for reasons which must be obvious, the space devoted to this purpose is comparatively brief. Less could not have been said, without marring the completeness of the work; and, on the other hand, had the text been more full and explicit, political sympathies and affinities might have been manifested, which ought to be carefully concealed.

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LIFE

OF

ANDREW JACKSON.

CHAPTER I.

1767. Introductory remarks—Birth and parentage of Andrew Jackson—His early life—Influence of his mother—War of the Revolution—Colonel Buford surprised and defeated—Martial spirit of the colonists—Andrew Jackson joins the American army—Heroic conduct in defending Captain Lands—Surprise of the Waxhaw settlers at their rendezvous—Escape and capture of Jackson—His stratagem to prevent the seizure of Thompson—Imprisonment at Camden—His release, and death of his brother and mother—Pecuniary difficulties—Commences the study of the law—Is licensed to practice—Appointed Solicitor for the western district of North Carolina—Arrival at Nashville. 1789.

In seasons of high party excitement, it is not to be expected, that full and impartial justice will at all times be rendered to the statesman or politician. There is an ancient French maxim, which cautions the legislator to “think of the rising generation, rather than of that which is passed.” It is not amid the prejudices and jealousies of the present, but in the enlightened judgment of the far-off future that he must look for his reward. Cotemporaneous history is always hasty, and often unjust, in its conclusions; but “the sober second thought” of posterity is ever prompt to repair the wrong. It was the fortune of the subject of these memoirs to occupy, for a series of years, a prominent place in the public estimation, as the leader of the political party to which he was attached. During that time, much was said, both for and against him, which it would scarcely become the dignity of history

to record ; nor would his most devoted admirer ask, at this day, that any thing should be written concerning him, except what was conceived in the same spirit that prompted the memorable remark of the iron-hearted Cromwell to young Lely, "Paint me as I am!" His death has hushed the embittered passions of the hour, and public opinion has already settled down upon a conviction highly favorable to his memory. Few men have ever lived, who exhibited, in a more remarkable degree, those salient points of character, calculated to enforce attention and respect, or possessed those peculiar traits of disposition, which are sure to inspire the warm and devoted attachment of personal friends. His life and his character, both as a public and private citizen, the storied incidents of his military career, and the important services rendered to the country, are now regarded, by general consent, as the common property of the nation. Like truly great men, he has left the impress of his mind upon the age in which he lived ; and there is not a single American, whose heart is alive to the emotions of patriotism, but feels it beat with a quicker and warmer glow, at the mention of his honored name.

Andrew Jackson was descended from a Scotch family, who emigrated to the north of Ireland, at a very remote period. His ancestors suffered many hardships, on account of the cruel and arbitrary exactions of the English government. The continuance of these grievances, which at times almost passed the limits of human endurance, induced his father, Andrew Jackson, after whom he was named, to emigrate to this country, with his wife and two sons, Hugh and Robert, in the year 1765. He landed at Charleston, in South Carolina, and shortly afterwards purchased a tract of land, in what was then called the "Waxhaw settlement," about forty-five miles above Camden, and near the boundary line of North Carolina, where he settled with his family. His son, Andrew, was born on the 15th day of March, 1767, about two years subsequent to the arrival of his parents in this country.

Soon after the birth of young Andrew, his father died: leaving him, and his two brothers, to the sole care and

guardianship of their mother, who appears to have been a most exemplary woman. She possessed many excellent qualities, both of head and heart; and her children were, early in life, deeply imbued with the straight forward resoluteness of purpose, and Spartan heroism of character, for which she was distinguished. Among the many noble mothers, whose sons have reaped the rich harvest of renown springing from the seed planted by their hands, none deserve higher praise or commendation. To the lessons she inculcated on the youthful minds of her sons, may, in a great measure, be attributed that fixed opposition to British tyranny and oppression, which they afterwards manifested. Often would she spend the winter evenings, in recounting to them the sufferings of their grandfather at the siege of Carrickfergus, and the oppressions exercised by the nobility of Ireland over the laboring poor; impressing it upon them as a first duty, to expend their lives, if it should become necessary, in defending and supporting the natural rights of man.

As they inherited but a small patrimony from their father, it was impossible that all the sons could receive an expensive education. The two eldest, therefore, were only taught the rudiments of their mother tongue, at a common country school. But Andrew, being intended by his mother for the ministry, was sent to a flourishing academy at the Waxhaw meeting-house, superintended by Mr. Humphries. Here he was placed on the study of the dead languages, and continued until the revolutionary war, extending its ravages into that section of South Carolina where he then was, rendered it necessary that every one should either betake himself to the American standard, seek protection with the enemy, or flee his country.

When the revolutionary war first broke out, in 1775, Andrew Jackson was but eight years old, and it was a long time before its horrors were felt in the immediate vicinity of his residence. But from his youth up, he was familiar with the story of the repeated aggressions and insults, which forced the American colonists to resort to the last remedy of an injured people. He eagerly listened

to the thrilling accounts that reached his quiet neighborhood, of the heroic deeds performed by his brave countrymen, at Lexington and Bunker-hill, Saratoga and Monmouth ; and while he listened, his heart burned with the fire of an incipient patriotism, to avenge the wrongs of his native land. The young and middle-aged men around him were constantly training themselves for any emergency, and his mother encouraged, rather than checked, his growing passion for a soldier's life, instead of the peaceful profession for which he was designed. It was a critical time in the destinies of the infant republic, and she required the aid of every stout hand and strong heart, whether it beat beneath the surplice of the priest, or the rough habiliments of the back-woodsman.

An opportunity was soon afforded, for him to gratify his ardent desire of mingling in the deadly strife which had imbrued the American soil with blood. South Carolina was invaded by the British, under General Prevost, in 1779, and in the month of May of the following year, Colonel Buford and about four hundred men under his command were overtaken by Colonel Tarleton, who had been despatched to cut off the party by Lord Cornwallis, with a force of seven hundred men, and an indiscriminate slaughter ensued, although little or no resistance was offered. Many begged for quarter in vain. The only answer was a stroke of the sabre, or a thrust of the bayonet. This act of atrocious barbarity was followed by others of a similar character. Men could not sleep in their own houses unguarded, without danger of surprise and murder. Even boys, who were stout enough to carry muskets, were induced, by a regard for their own safety, as well as from inclination, to incur the dangers of men. Young Jackson and his brothers had their guns and horses, and were almost always in company with some armed party of their kindred or neighbors. Hugh, who was the eldest of the three, was present at the battle of Stono, and lost his life, from the excessive heat of the weather and the fatigue of the day. Shortly after this event, Mrs. Jackson retired before the invading army, with her two remaining sons, Robert and Andrew, into North Carolina. She remained

there but a short time, and, on returning to the Waxhaws, both Robert and Andrew joined the American army, and were present at the battle of Hanging Rock, on the sixth of August, 1780, in which the corps to which they belonged particularly distinguished itself. In the month of September, Mrs. Jackson and her sons, with most of the Waxhaw settlers, were again compelled to retire into North Carolina; from which they returned in February, 1781, as soon as they heard that Lord Cornwallis had crossed the Yadkin.

It was during the trying scenes of this period of the revolutionary struggle, that Andrew Jackson gave the first illustration of that quickness of thought, and promptitude of action, which afterwards placed him in the front rank of military commanders. A Whig captain, named Lands, who had been absent from home for some time, desired to spend a night with his family. Robert and Andrew Jackson, with one of the Crawfords, and five others, constituted his guard. There were nine men and seven muskets. Having no special apprehensions of an attack, they lay down on their arms, and, with the exception of a British deserter, who was one of the party, went to sleep. Lands' house was in the centre of an enclosed yard, and had two doors, facing east and west. Before the east door stood a forked apple-tree. In the southwest corner of the yard were a corncrib and stable under one roof, ranging east and west. On the south was a wood, and through it passed the road by which the house was approached.

A party of Tories became apprized of Lands' return, and determined to surprise and kill him. Approaching through the wood, and tying their horses behind the stable, they divided into two parties, one advancing round the east end of the stable towards the east door of the house, and the other round the west end towards the west door. At this moment, the wakeful soldier, hearing a noise in the direction of the stable, went out to see what was the matter, and perceived the party which were entering the yard at the east end of the building. Running back in terror, he seized Andrew Jackson, who was near-

est the door, by the hair, exclaiming, "The Tories are upon us." Our young hero ran out, and, putting his gun through the fork of the apple-tree, hailed the approaching band. Having repeated his hail without an answer, and perceiving the party rapidly advancing and but a few rods distant, he fired. A volley was returned, which killed the soldier, who, having aroused the inmates of the house, had followed young Jackson, and was standing near him. The other band of Tories had now emerged from the west end of the stable, and mistaking the discharge of the advance party, then nearly on a line between them and the apple-tree, for the fire of a sallying party from the house, commenced a sharp fire upon their own friends. Thus both parties were brought to a stand. Young Andrew, after discharging his gun, returned into the house; and, with two others, commenced a fire from the west door, where both of his companions were shot down, one of them with a mortal wound. The Tories still kept up the fire upon each other, as well as upon the house, until, startled by the sound of a cavalry bugle in the distance, they betook themselves to their horses, and fled. The charge was sounded by a Major Isbel, who had not a man with him, but, hearing the firing, and knowing that Lands was attacked, he gave the blast upon his trumpet to alarm the assailants.

The British commander, having been advised of the return of the Waxhaw settlers, despatched Major Coffin, with a corps of light dragoons, a company of infantry, and a considerable number of Tories, for their capture and destruction. Hearing of their approach, the settlers appointed the Waxhaw meeting-house as a place of rendezvous, and about forty of them, among whom were the two Jacksons, had assembled there on the day appointed, and were waiting for a friendly company under Captain Nisbett. When the enemy approached, their commanding officer placed the Tories in front, in order to conceal the dragoons; and the little band of settlers were completely deceived by the stratagem. Supposing the reinforcement for which they had been waiting was approaching, they were prepared to welcome them as friends, but the mo-

ment after they discovered their unfortunate mistake. Eleven of the number were taken prisoners, and the rest sought for safety in flight. The two Jacksons were among those who escaped, and temporarily eluded pursuit. They remained together during the ensuing night, and on the approach of morning concealed themselves in a thicket on the bank of a small creek, not far from the house of Lieutenant Crawford, who had been wounded and made prisoner. Becoming very hungry, they left their horses in the wood, and ventured out to Crawford's for food. But a party of Tories, who were well acquainted with the country, and the passes through the forest, unfortunately passed the creek, in the mean time, at the very point where the horses and baggage had been left; and, guided by one of their number, whose name was Johnson, they approached the house, in company with a small body of dragoons, and presented themselves at the door, before the young Jacksons were aware of their approach.

Resistance and flight were alike hopeless, and neither was attempted. Mrs. Crawford, with several children, one of whom was at the breast, were the inmates of the house. A scene of destruction immediately took place. All the glass, crockery, and other furniture, were dashed in pieces. The beds were ripped open, and the feathers scattered to the winds. The clothing of the whole family, men, women, and children, was cut and torn into fragments. Even the children's clothes shared the fate of the rest. Mercy for the wife and little ones of a husband and father, who was already wounded and in their hands, and doomed to imprisonment, if not death, touched not the hearts of these remorseless men, and nothing was left to the terrified and wretched family, but the clothes they had on, and a desolate habitation. No attempt was made, by the British officer commanding, to arrest this destruction. While it was in progress, he ordered Andrew Jackson to clean his muddy boots. The young soldier refused, claiming to be treated with the respect due to a prisoner of war. Instead of admiring this manly spirit in one so young, the cowardly ruffian struck at his

head with his sword ; but, throwing up his left hand, the intended victim received a gash upon it, the scar of which he carried to the grave. Turning to Robert Jackson, the officer ordered him to perform the menial task, and, receiving a like refusal, aimed a furious blow at his head also, and inflicted a wound from which he never recovered.

After these exhibitions of ferocity, the party set Andrew Jackson upon a horse, and ordered him, on pain of instant death, to lead them to the house of a well-known Whig, by the name of Thompson. Apprehending that Thompson was at home, it occurred to his young friend that he might save him by a stratagem. At that time, when men were at home, they generally kept a look-out to avoid surprise, and had a horse ready for flight. Instead of leading the party by the usual route, young Andrew took them through woods and fields, which brought them over an eminence in sight of the house, at the distance of half a mile. On reaching the summit, he beheld Thompson's horse tied to his rack, a sure sign that his owner was at home. The British dragoons darted forward, and, in breathless apprehension, Andrew Jackson kept his eye upon Thompson's horse. With inexpressible joy, he saw Thompson, while the dragoons were still a few hundred yards distant, rush out, mount his horse, dash into the creek which ran foaming by, and in a minute ascend the opposite bank. He was then out of pistol shot, and as his pursuers dared not swim the rapid stream, he stopped long enough to shout execration and defiance, and then rode leisurely off.

Andrew Jackson and his brother, with about twenty other prisoners, were mounted on captured horses, and started for Camden, over forty miles distant. Not a mouthful of food, or drop of water, was given them on the route. The streams which they forded had been swollen by recent rains ; but when they stooped to take up a little water in the palms of their hands, to assuage their burning thirst, they were ordered to desist by the brutal guard.

Arrived at Camden, they were confined, with about two hundred and fifty other prisoners, in a redoubt surrounding the jail, and overlooking the country to the north. No

attention was paid to their wounds or their wants. They had no beds, nor any substitute; and their only food was a scanty supply of bad bread. They were robbed of a portion of their clothing, taunted by Tories with being rebels, and assured that they would be hanged. Andrew Jackson himself was stripped of his jacket and shoes. With a refinement of cruelty, the Jacksons and their cousin, Thomas Crawford, two of them severely wounded, were separated as soon as their relationship was known, and kept in perfect ignorance of each other's condition or fate. In aggravation of their sufferings, the small-pox made its appearance among them. Not a step was taken to stay its progress or mitigate its afflictions. Without physicians or nurses, denied even the kind attentions and sympathy of relatives who were fellow-prisoners, their keepers left them to perish, not only without compassion, but with apparent satisfaction.

One day Andrew Jackson was sunning himself in the entrance of his prison, when the officer of the guard, apparently struck with his youthful appearance, entered into conversation with him. With characteristic energy, the fearless lad described to him the condition of the prisoners; and among the rest, their sufferings from the scantiness and bad quality of their food. Immediately meat was added to their bread, and there was otherwise a decided improvement. The Provost was a Tory from New York; and it was afterwards alleged that he withheld the meat he had contracted to supply for the support of the prisoners, to feed a gang of negroes, which he had collected from the plantations of the Whigs, with intent to convert them to his own use.

During the confinement of the Waxhaw prisoners at Camden, General Greene made his unsuccessful attack on the British forces at that post under Lord Rawdon. The American army was encamped on Hobkirk's Hill, about a mile distant, and in full view of the redoubt in which the prisoners were confined. On the morning of the 24th of April, Andrew Jackson became convinced, from what he saw and heard, that a battle was soon to take place. He was exceedingly anxious to witness the conflict, but the

thick plank fence that extended around the redoubt, completely shut out the view of the surrounding country. Determined that he would not be foiled in his wish, he set himself at work with an old razor-blade, which had been given to the prisoners to eat their rations with, and by working the greater part of the night, he contrived to cut one of the knots out of a plank, and through this obtained a view of Greene's encampment, and of the sanguinary struggle which took place on the following day.

In a few days after the battle before Camden, the two Jacksons were released, in pursuance of a partial exchange effected by the intercessions and exertions of their mother, and Captain Walker of the militia. While he was confined in prison, Robert had suffered greatly from the wound in his head which had never been dressed. Inflammation of the brain soon after ensued, which brought him to his grave, in a few days after his liberation. The mother also, worn out with anxiety and solicitude for her children, and her incessant efforts to relieve the sufferings of the prisoners who had been brought from her own neighborhood, was taken sick, and expired in a few weeks, near the lines of the enemy in the vicinity of Charleston. These repeated afflictions were keenly felt by young Jackson, and it was some time before he entirely recovered from the shock occasioned by so sudden a bereavement. He was tenderly attached to his mother and brother, and as they were his only relatives, their death must have been a severe blow to him. The buoyancy of youth, however, enabled him to bear up manfully against misfortune, and he soon after entered into the enjoyment of his estate, which, though small, was sufficient to have given him a liberal education. Unfortunately he had become quite intimate with a number of the most polished citizens of Charleston, who had retired to the Waxhaw settlement, during the occupation of that city by the British, and had contracted habits, and imbibed tastes, which it was unwise in him to indulge. He accompanied his friends on their return to Charleston; and, as he determined not to be outdone by his associates, his money was expended so profusely that his whole patrimony was

soon exhausted, and he was left with nothing but a fine horse which he had taken from the Waxhaws. The animal itself was at length staked against a sum of money, in a game of "rattle and snap." Jackson won the game; and, forming a sudden resolution, he pocketed the money, bade adieu to his friends, and returned home.

This occurrence took place in the winter of 1784, and immediately after his return to the Waxhaws, Jackson collected the remains of his little property, with the intention of acquiring a profession, and preparing himself to enter on the busy scenes of life. After pursuing the study of the languages, and other desultory branches of education, under Mr. McCulloch, in that part of Carolina which was then called the New Acquisition, near Hill's Iron Works, for several months, he concluded to abandon the pulpit for which he had been designed by his mother, and embraced the legal profession. In pursuance of this determination, he repaired to Salisbury, in North Carolina, and commenced the study of the law, under Spruce McCay, Esq., afterwards one of the judges of that state, and subsequently continued it under Colonel John Stokes. Having remained at Salisbury until the winter of 1786, he obtained a license from the judges to practice law, and continued in the state until the spring of 1788. As an evidence of the estimation in which his talents were at that time held by the influential men of North Carolina, he soon after received from the governor the appointment of Solicitor for the western district of that state, of which the present state of Tennessee then formed a part.

The observations he was enabled to make while engaged in the study of his profession, had convinced him that North Carolina presented few inducements to a young attorney; and recollecting that he stood solitary in life, without relations to aid him in the outset, when innumerable difficulties arise and retard success, he determined to seek a new country. But for this he might have again returned to his native state. The death, however, of every relation he had, had wiped away all those endearing recollections and circumstances which attach the mind to the place of its nativity. The western district of the

state was often spoken of, as presenting flattering prospects to adventurers, and his official appointment in that quarter happened quite opportunely to enable him to carry out his intention of visiting that section of the country. In the year 1788, at the age of twenty-one years, he accompanied Judge McNairy, who was going out to hold the first Supreme Court that had ever sat in the district. Having reached the Holston, they ascertained that it would be impossible to arrive at the time appointed for the session of the court; and therefore took up their residence, for some time, at Jonesborough, then the principal seat of justice in the western district. They recommenced their journey, in October, 1789, and passing through an extensive uninhabited country, reached Nashville in the same month.